Lesson Plan Template Rev 10/1/09 Dr. Thieman

Name:\_\_Rob Frenzel\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Age/Grade Level\_\_\_11th grade\_\_\_\_\_

Subject Area(s)\_\_U.S. History\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Unit Title\_ World War II and Beyond: The African American Experience

Lesson Title\_Suburbanization and Segregation Estimated Time\_\_70 minutes

**Purpose/Rationale for lesson:**

Demonstrate the changing nature of where Americans lived after World War II

**Curriculum Framing Questions:**

Essential Question: How does war contribute to social change?

Unit Question that applies to this lesson: How did the return of soldiers from World War II lead to changes in the social fabric?

Lesson or Content Question(s): Where did Americans choose to live after World War II? What barriers did African Americans face in choosing where to live? Was racism a factor in where Americans chose to live?

**Goal:** (broad general understanding or skill)

Develop an understanding of major social changes in American society in the post-World War II period

**Learning Objective(s):** (behavioral, observable, measureable)

After completing this lesson students should be able to:

* Explain the connection between World War II and the growth of suburbs in America
* Describe what barriers existed for African Americans looking to buy a house in the suburbs
* Compare segregation in suburbs to “Jim Crow” segregation in the South

**Curriculum Standard(s):** state or national that apply to this lesson

SS.HS.HS.03 Recognize and interpret continuity and/or change with respect to particular historical developments in the 20th century.

**Materials Needed:**

--Computer

--Visual projector

--Audio speakers

--Highlighters

--Audio clip “Little Boxes” <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2_2lGkEU4Xs>

--Video clip “1950’s Film on Suburbanization” <http://www.metacafe.com/watch/1961369/1950_s_film_on_suburbanization_of_american_w_philadelphia/>

--Hand out “Population and Race: 1950-1970” <http://edsitement.neh.gov/sites/default/files/worksheets/suburbia-worksheet.pdf>

--Hand out on Bill Levitt (attached: see below)

--Video clip “Racism in America: Crisis In Levittown, PA Documentary Part 1 (1957)”

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ELW9eQAYcY>

**Background knowledge or skills students need prior to lesson:**

--The G.I. Bill and its benefits for returning soldiers

--The definition of de jure and de facto segregation

--“Jim Crow” laws and de jure segregation in the southern United States

**Hook or Introduction** to get students’ attention and get them:

At the beginning of the class play clip of the song “Little Boxes” by Malvina Reynolds (2 minutes). Ask students what they think the song is about. Is it describing something or somewhere specific? Ask students what they think the lyrics “ticky tacky” mean? (5 minutes total)

**Procedures:**

Step 1: Recap major points of the G.I. Bill. Teacher will call on students at random and write on the board what benefits were granted to returning G.I.’s. When the students say “housing” or “home loans”, highlight that point. Ask students where they think the housing was? Where would millions of returning soldiers go? (5 minutes)

Step 2: Have students take out a piece of paper. Teacher writes the words “inner city” on the board. Give students two minutes to list their first impressions that come to mind. Then have the students pair-share their impressions for two minutes. (5 minutes total)

Step 3: Teacher writes the word “suburb” on the board. On the same piece of paper, have students write their first impressions of a suburb (2 minutes). Have students pair-share their impressions for two minutes. (5 minutes total)

Step 4: Have students report back to the class on what their impressions were. Teacher writes impressions for each term on the board under each word. Teacher explains that suburbs were a relatively recent concept that did not really exist until after World War II. Teacher will tell students that the millions of returning G.I.’s led to a shortage in housing and that government got involved through FHA loans, GI Bill loans to returning soldiers. Because of the housing shortage, entrepreneurs like Bill Levitt and others began to build housing that was well built and affordable on former farmland outside of central cities. Many Americans could now afford to buy both a house and a car, which made it ok to live further away from the cities where they worked. The result was that millions of Americans jumped at the chance to own a home in a quiet setting with a yard instead of a smaller apartment in noisy, crowded cities. (5 minutes)

Step 5: Show video clip “1950’s Film on Suburbanization”. (Film clip lasts about 1 minute).

Teacher asks students if they notice anything unusual about the film. If no one brings it up, point out the lack of African Americans in the film.

Step 6: Break students into groups of four. Give each group handout “Population by Residence and Race: 1950-1970”.

Teacher passes out highlighters to each group. Have each group highlight any trends that they see on the handout. Give the groups five minutes with the handout. Teacher will walk around to each group to provide assistance if necessary. Pick groups at random to answer the following questions:

* How does the population of the central cities change?
* How does the population of the outside central cities (suburban) change?
* How does the population change of African Americans differ from the population change of whites? (10 minutes)

Step 7: Teacher will distribute handout on Bill Levitt (See Appendix below). Teacher will have student volunteers read one section at a time. When students are done reading, teacher will repeat Levitt’s statement about how 90-95% of his white customers wouldn’t want to buy in a community that sold to blacks. Ask students “do you think that all white homeowners felt this way or do you think that there were differences of opinion on the matter?” (5 minutes)

Step 8: Show film: “Racism in America: Crisis In Levittown, PA Documentary Part 1. Before starting film warn students that the film will contain language that is not considered appropriate by today’s standards but was unfortunately in common usage in 1957. Stop film at 8:05 when narrator asks “If a Negro can afford what you can afford, how can you justify your feeling of superiority?” Ask students to reflect on that question and if it was a motivating factor for whites who wanted to bar the Myers family from living in Levittown.

Step 9: Resume film. Stop film again at 9:09 when the woman says “through bettering themselves, not pushing their way in…” Teacher asks the students if they think there are any circumstances in which this woman would be OK with an African American moving into her neighborhood. Ask students if this type of racism still exists?

Step 10: Resume film. Play until the end. (Total running time of film and discussion 25 minutes)

Step 11: Assign homework as detailed below. Teacher will give students a handout with the homework assignment printed on it.

**Differentiation/Accommodation** for diverse learners in your classroom.

TAG: Modified essay question: If African Americans were barred from living in suburbs like Levittown, what implications might that have for future generations of African Americans. How might this affect their future prospects for education and employment? Consider your impressions of “suburb” and “inner city”.

ADHD/IEP: Give a seat in the front of the class. Give “Population and Race” handout already highlighted. Give handout on Bill Levitt already highlighted. Allow student to turn in bullet points of main ideas instead of essay. Follow any additional instruction in a student’s IEP

**Closure:**

Teacher will give students two minutes to write in a personal journal two ways in which the end of World War II led to changes in American society. Teacher will then do a quick whip around the class and have students give one of their examples. (4 minutes)

**Assessment and Evaluation of Student Learning:**

Homework assignment: Students will write a one to two page essay that will include the following:

1. Explain several factors that led to many Americans deciding to move to the suburbs after World War II?

2. Explain some of the barriers that prevented African Americans from living in the suburbs? Think about these barriers in terms of different types of segregation you’ve learned about.

3. How did all-white suburbs differ from the “Jim Crow” laws in the South? Was the effect any different?

An excellent essay will clearly identify multiple reasons why white Americans flocked to the suburbs after World War II including social status, peaceful place to raise their families, the chance to own their own home, affordable loans through the G.I. bill. It will also identify barriers to entry for African American families including de facto segregation, refusal to sell to blacks, fears of intermarriage, desire of whites to live in all-white neighborhoods. It will also recognize the distinction between the de jure segregation in the South and the de facto segregation found in the new suburbs and note that both systems caused harm to African American families

A good essay will identify one or two reasons why Americans moved to the suburbs. It will include one or two barriers that African Americans faced as they attempted to move to the suburbs. It will correctly identify the different types of segregation faced in the suburbs and the South but may not contain a judgment whether the effect was different

A lesser quality essay will not clearly articulate reasons why white Americans chose to live in the suburbs, or the factors which made that possible. It will also fail to identify barriers to entry for African American families and fail to differentiate between different types of discrimination faced.

**Appendix: Handout on Bill Levitt**

Bill Levitt, the designer of Levittown, refused to sell to blacks for almost two decades. He feared that the popularity and the value of Levittown property would be greatly reduced if he sold to blacks. Read and react to Levitt's reasons. Though Levittown is just one example of suburb development in the 1950s, segregation was and is a problem that still exists in suburban America. Some of America's most segregated states are states with large suburban populations (i.e. New Jersey). Through high property values and the covert practice of not selling to minority groups many of these communities practice de facto segregation.

"'Levitt initially would not sell to blacks. 'The Negroes in America,' he said, 'are trying to do in four hundred years what the Jews in the world have not wholly accomplished in six thousand. As a Jew, I have no room in my mind or heart for racial prejudice. But … I have come to know that if we sell one house to a Negro family, then ninety to ninety-five percent of our white customers will not buy into the community. That is their attitude, not ours …. As a company, our position is simply this: we can solve a housing problem, or we can try to solve a racial problem. But we cannot combine the two.'"

(Rosenbaum, Ron. "The House that Levitt Built." Esquire December 1983: 391)

"A suit by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People against the Federal mortgaging agencies involved, filed in behalf of six Negroes prevented from buying homes in Levittown, Pennsylvania, was dismissed by the Philadelphia Federal District Court in March 1955. The court ruled that neither the Federal Housing Administration nor the Veterans Administration, although guaranteeing the mortgages, had been charged by Congress with the duty of preventing discrimination in home sales."

(Lander, Marjorie Dent ed. Current Biography 1956. New York, NYC: H.W. Wilson & Co., 1956. Page 375.)

Levitt finally decided to desegregate in late 1959 when the State Court of Pennsylvania threatened to hold public hearings about the issue. Fearful of the negative press, Levitt promised to desegregate in order to avoid the bad press.

(Gans, Herbert J. The Levittowners Ways of Life and Politics in a New Suburban Community. New York, NY: Pantheon Books., 1967. page 55.)

Full article found at: <http://www.njdigitalhighway.org/enj/lessons/suburban_nj/?part=race_and_gender>